

Charity Retail Association™

The voice of charity retail

Selling Online Survey 2011



Executive Summary

- 56% of charities sell items online.
- The website most commonly used is eBay (94% of those selling online) followed by charities' own website (31%) and Amazon (17%).
- For 29% of charities, online sales make up more than 3% of total sales.
- On average, 76% of sales come from eBay, 17% from the charity's own website, 6% from Amazon and 1% from other websites.

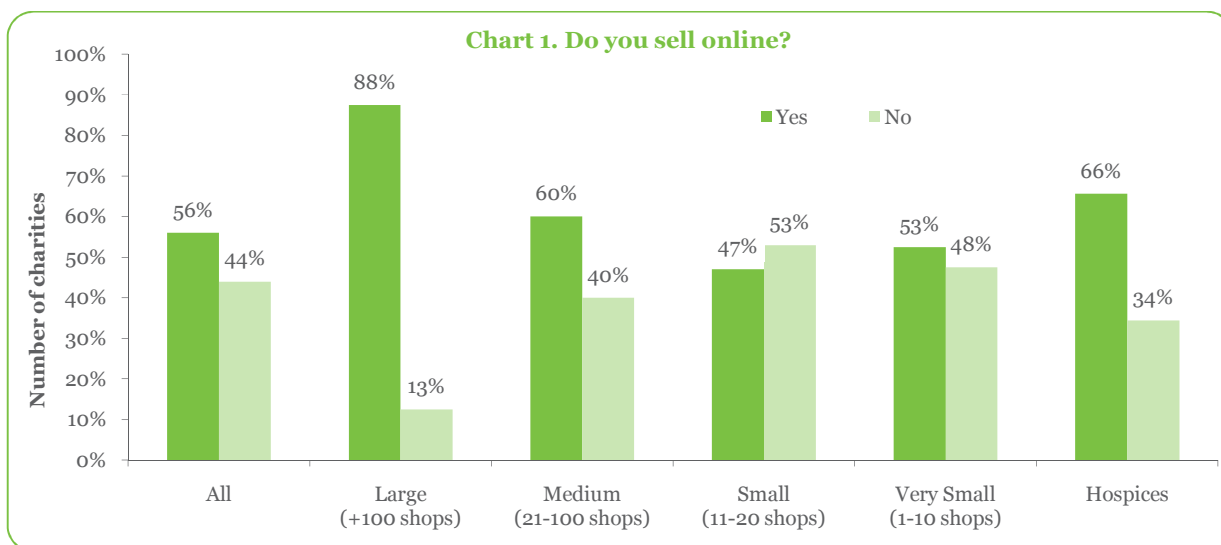
1. Comments on sample

75 charities have taken part in this survey, running 4,105 shops between them. Where charities are grouped according to size, 'large' charities operate over 100 shops, 'medium' charities operate 21-100 shops, 'small' charities operate 11-20 shops and 'very small' charities operate 1-10 shops. References will be made to last year's survey but please note that these comparisons are not from matched samples. Hospices are shown as a different category but they are also included in their corresponding charity size.

2. How many charities are selling online?

42 of those charities who responded to this survey said they are currently selling online. Almost all of the charities not selling online are small or very small charities.

Chart 1 shows the proportion of charities selling or not selling online by size.



Sample= All (75), Large (8), Medium (10), Small (17), Very Small (40), Hospices (32)

Hospices are also analysed as a separate category, but are still included in the other size categories

- The proportion of hospices, large and very small charities selling online is higher this year compared to 2010's survey (50%, 82% and 41% in 2010 respectively). The proportions are slightly lower for medium and small charities (67% and 50% in 2010 respectively).

These comparisons are not from matched samples.

3. Which websites do charity shops use to sell online?

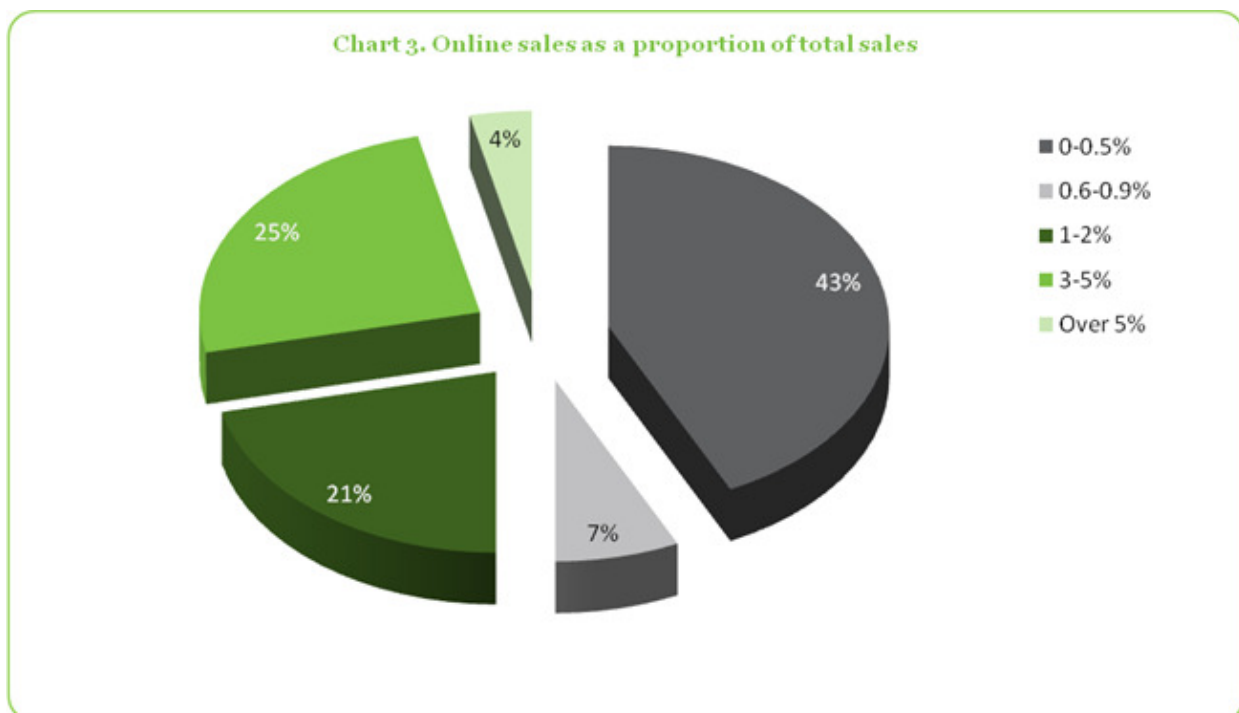
We asked charities which websites they used to sell online. Chart 2 summarises the answers by charity size.



Sample= 35 charities running 2687 shops. (11) Larger, (24) Smaller and (17) Hospices

4. Proportion of online sales

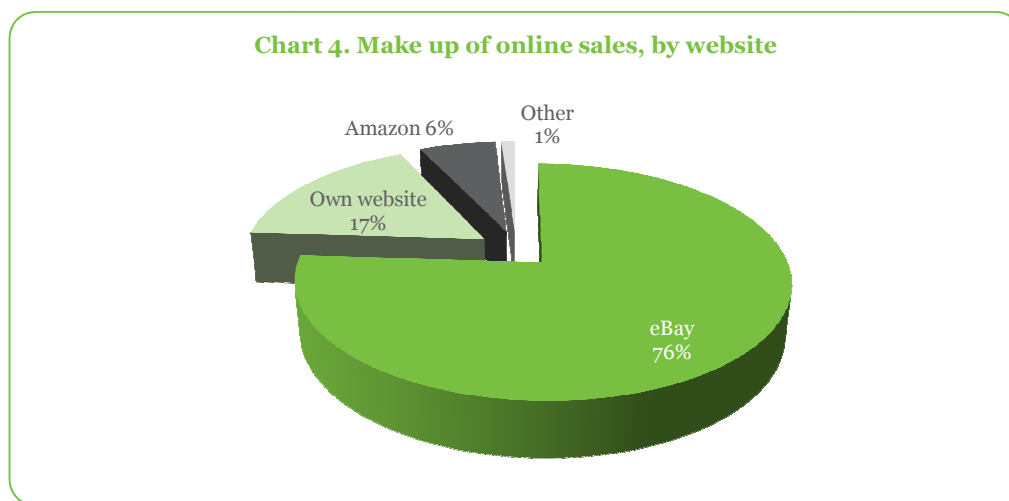
We asked charities that are selling online what proportion of total sales are online sales. 28 charities were able to answer this question and the answers are summarised in the Chart 3.



- 25% of charities said that online sales made up between 3-5% of sales compared to 9% last year. This is driven by both larger and smaller charities reporting higher proportions of sales coming from online trading.

5. Make up of online sales, by website

We asked charities to report the proportion of online sales that each type of website made up. Chart 4 summarises the findings of the 31 charities that were able to answer this question.



Sample=31 charities 2485

- 17 charities reported that they have 100% of their online income coming from the sales on eBay. This is similar to what was reported last year.
- Only 1 small charity reported that they have 100% of their online income coming from sales on their own website.
- The proportion of income from eBay sales is higher than last year (76% this year compared to 60% in 2010).

6. Expectations for online sales for next year

33 charities told us their views about the change of online sales this year. Most charities (87%) expect online sales to increase; 45% expected to increase a lot and 42% only slightly. 9%, (3 charities; 2 very small and 1 medium), expect online sales to stay the same. Only 1 very small charity expected online sales to fall slightly.

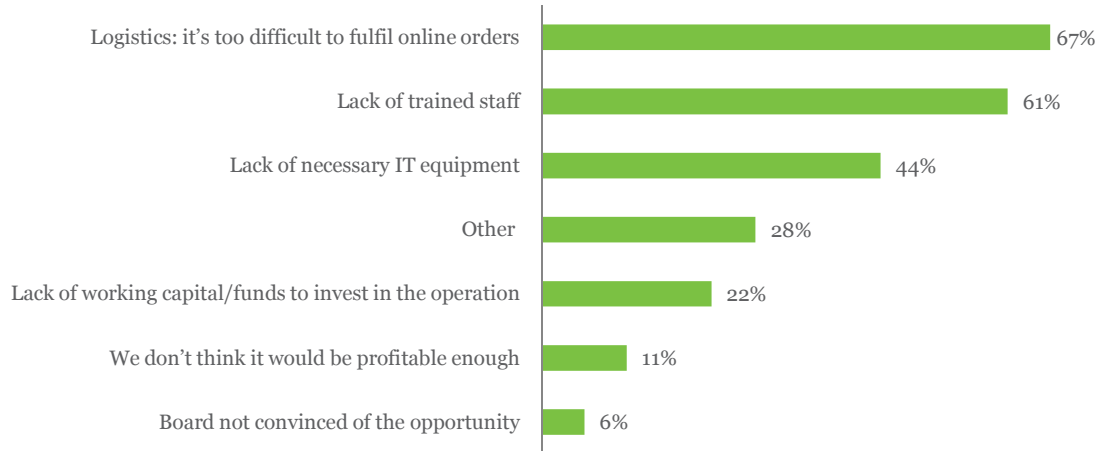
7. Barriers and opportunities of selling online

20 charities not currently selling online said whether or not they are planning to sell online later in 2011. 11 were planning to start selling on eBay in 2011, 7 intend to start selling on their own website, 3 will start selling on Amazon and 1 is planning to sell through *Abebooks*. 6 charities were not planning to sell online in 2011.

Reasons for not selling online

As shown in Chart 5 the reason most frequently cited by charity shops not to sell online is the difficulty of fulfilling online orders followed by lack of trained staff. The other things mentioned were lack of space, shortage of volunteers to process online orders or lack of suitable items to sell online.

Chart 5. Reasons for not selling online

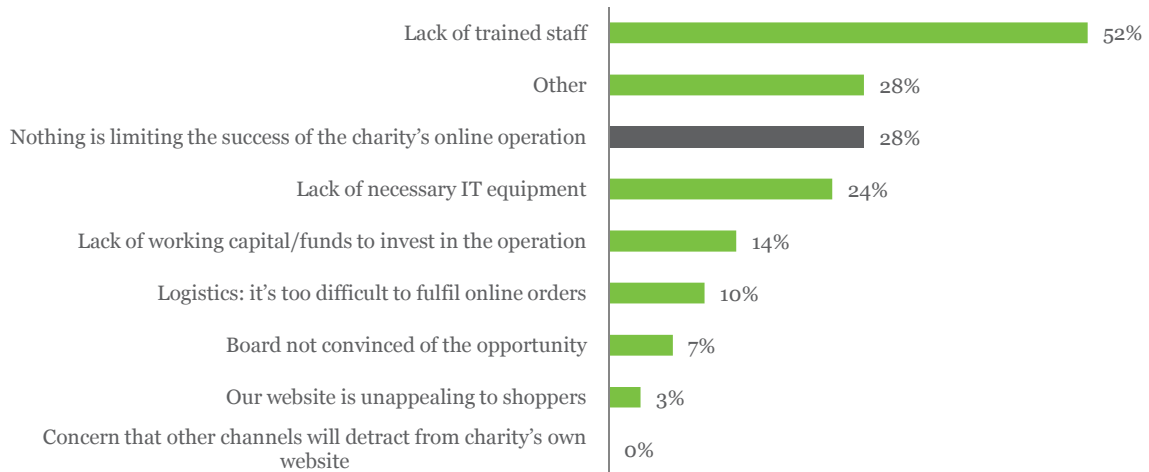


Sample: 20 charities running 410 shops

Barriers for charities selling online

The main factors limiting the success of charity shops' online operations are lack of trained staff (which was also one of the main reasons for not selling online as shown in Chart 5) followed by the lack of IT equipment. Interestingly, 28% of the charities said that no factor was limiting the success of the operation.

Chart 6. Factors that are limiting the success of the charity's online operation



Sample: 29 charities running 2,488 shops